

Double Cross

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In a back alley cantina in the floating city of Tolea Biqua, a nameless Human waits for a special package to be delivered by a Rodian mercenary. The contents of the parcel are dangerous enough, but that's nothing compared to the double-cross about to wreak havoc in the Cularin system. Learn more in our latest supplement to the **Living Force** campaign.



Things are never quiet in the Cularin system. Smugglers cross between its worlds, pirates lurk amid the spinning rocks of its asteroid belt, and shadows move when no one is watching. It is a busy time, both for the system's natives and for those just passing through. Some of these are dignitaries from distant worlds, while others would prefer to be left nameless. A meeting of the latter is taking place in a back alley bar in the floating city of Tolea Biqua even now . . .

Kletoo sat down quickly, his large lidless eyes scanning the room nervously. They were far enough back and out of the way that it was unlikely anything could be overheard, but gatherings like this always made him uncomfortable. "Why do we have to keep doing this? You know I like private rooms."

"Yes," replied the garishly dressed Human sitting at the back of the corner booth, "which is precisely why I meet you out here. People bug private rooms. Out here, there is too much noise to make out anything useful. Besides, I like making you . . . uncomfortable."

The Rodian glowered, an odd expression for one of his kind, but the message was clear enough. He disliked this venue, this meeting, and the man he was talking to intensely. If he weren't under orders, he'd like nothing better than to burn the Human down where he sat, outlandish outfit and all.

The Human must have read that intention in his body language, because he held up one hand in a peaceful gesture. "Clam yourself, Kletoo. I only meant that when people are uncomfortable, they pay attention better." He sipped at his Outer-Rim rum drop, smiling as the swirls of red disappeared past his lips. "I do like these things. Pity we don't own the manufacturer . . . yet."

Kletoo grumbled something about mammals and their odd tastes, but the Human let that go. The Rodian then said, "Okay, fine by me. I am uncomfortable, so I am paying attention. Give me a reason for both or I swear I will --"

The man shot Kletoo a meaningful look, one tinged with just enough malice to shut him up. "I would not finish that sentence if I were you. I know how seriously your kind take their oaths. Let's keep this friendly. After all, we both stand to profit greatly from our mutual employer. Yes?"

The Rodian sighed and nodded. That much was true. "Can we get on with this, then?"

The last of the rum drop vanished with a long quaff. "I trust you have the documents I asked for?"

Kletoo slid a package with a pair of data chips and a coded reader across the table, leaving his hand on the parcel the whole time. "Yes, but you owe me double. I lost my partner getting this for you."

The Human stared at the Rodian levelly, smiling after a long, tense moment. "Your partner? That obnoxious little Duro with the blaster fixation?"

The Rodian's eyes swiveled forward, his species' equivalent of narrowing them at something he found offensive. "Yes."

Carefully, the man started to slip the package out from under the Rodian's insistent hand. "Well, you were going to split the fee, so, in a way, I would say you did get double. Wouldn't you?"

As he spoke, a pair of Trandoshans at the bar turned to face the back table. They nodded to the Human and let their coats fall open, revealing very large, very illegal guns.

The message was clear. Kletoo lifted his hand and let the Human have his parcel. "Fine. Is the money in my account?"

The man didn't answer until he verified the contents of the chips. His satisfied smile, illuminated in the glow of the reader screen, seemed almost a little too broad. "Oh, of course. My associates will show you out. Excellent work with these. Our employer will be quite happy to see them."

The two Trandoshans walked up to either side of Kletoo and "helped" him up.

The Human glanced up at him from the reader and sighed. "You can thank your partner for what's about to happen. I am afraid his little stunt with the grenades made rather more of a mess than we wanted. We needed you to get on and off Nirama's ship without alerting him to your presence." The Human shook his head. "Our employer was rather specific."

Before Kletoo could say a word, one of the Trandoshans elbowed him hard in the chest. All the air rushed from his lungs, keeping him from shouting or making a scene as they carried him out the back doors.

The Human watched the two enforcers leave with a slight shake of his head. They would be quick, at least. After all, Kletoo had delivered the goods. The man felt that killing the Rodian was a waste, but his hands were tied. His employer had been quite specific about dealing with the agent, as he'd been about what to do once the files were recovered. The Human flipped open a small communicator and pressed a hidden button on its side.

"Yes, D here. Please inform Lord R that his package is in custody. The opportunity he has been looking for is in there. With his authorization, we can begin. N's hold on this system is as weak as it is going to get. We need to move now."

From outside came the high-pitched whine of a blaster.

The Human listened to the answer from his contact, nodded, and ended the call. Just then, the two Trandoshans came back in and headed to the bar for a drink.

The man smiled to himself as he ordered another rum drop. Kletoo was dead, but he would not be alone for long. This was about to get messy, even more so than his employer could imagine.

He pressed another button on his comlink. "Hello? Yes. Tell M that R is about to make his move. More when I get details. Goodbye."

Yes, life was about to get bloody, but that was just a fact of life when you worked for a Hutt. It was even more certain when you were betraying one . . .

Living Force Game Notes

Effective immediately, characters with three or more levels of scoundrel with "certed" Favor of Nirama may find life difficult whenever they are operating on his behalf in the Cularin system. In addition, the following ship's modification is now available for open purchase to anyone with a transport-class vessel.

Smuggling Compartment: This hidden area of the ship adds +4 to the Search check required to find anything concealed within. It can hold one metric ton and costs 1,000 credits to install. Two of these compartments can be purchased for a transport of up to Small size, with two additional compartments for every size category larger than Small. Compartments need to be noted on the starship certificate in ink and signed off as paid in full by a GM before your next played adventure to be considered official.

*If you want to learn more about the **Living Force** campaign and how to take part in the adventure, this [introduction](#) will get you started.*